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General Assembly
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98th plenary meeting
Monday, 16 June 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 53 (*continued*)

Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/68/426/Add.1)

The President: I request the Rapporteur of the Committee, Mr. Michal Komada of Slovakia, to introduce the report of the Committee.

Mr. Komada (Slovakia), Rapporteur of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee): I have the honour to introduce to the General Assembly the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) submitted under agenda item 53, entitled "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects", as contained in document A/68/426/Add.1. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations held its substantive session between 24 February and 21 March, when it reviewed its work and considered new proposals.

By adopting the draft resolution contained in paragraph 6 of the report, and entitled "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all aspects", the General Assembly would endorse the proposals and recommendations contained in paragraph 17 to 315 of the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations issued in document A/68/19. The Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of this draft resolution.

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) that is before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President: Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, unless notified to otherwise in advance.

The General Assembly has before it a draft resolution recommended by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Assembly will now take action on the draft resolution. The Committee adopted it without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 68/277).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 53?

It was so decided.

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Agenda item 63 (*continued*)

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

(b) Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Draft resolution (A/68/L.43/Rev.1)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly considered, in a joint debate, agenda item 63 and its sub-items (a) and (b) and agenda item 13, at its 36th and 37th plenary meetings, on 25 October 2013.

I now give the floor to the representative of Uganda to introduce draft resolution A/68/L.43/Rev.1.

Mrs. Ssempa (Uganda): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the draft resolution contained in document A/68/L.43/Rev.1, under agenda item 63 (b), entitled "Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa".

The Group conveys its appreciation to all delegations for their constructive contributions to the draft resolution. We also thank all the Member States that have co-sponsored the draft resolution.

The draft resolution stresses, inter alia, that the responsibility for peace and security in Africa, including the capacity to address the root causes of conflict and to resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner, lies primarily with African countries, while recognizing the need for the provision of support by the international community and the United Nations, taking into account the responsibilities of the Organization in that regard, according to the Charter of the United Nations.

We welcome the progress made by African countries, the African Union and subregional organizations in conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development. We call for intensified efforts and a coordinated approach among national Governments, the African Union, subregional organizations, the United Nations system and partners in addressing those challenges, with a view to achieving further progress towards the goal of a conflict-free Africa.

The draft resolution recognizes that international and regional efforts to prevent conflict and consolidate peace in Africa should be channelled towards the sustainable development of Africa and the human and institutional capacity-building of African countries and organizations, particularly in the priority areas identified at the continental level. In that regard, we welcome the joint visit of the Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank to the countries of the Great Lakes region of Africa from 22 to 25 May 2013 and the financial pledge announced by the World Bank during that visit in support of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region.

We also welcome the joint visit of the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the President of the World Bank, the President of the African Development Bank and the European Union Commissioner for Development to the Sahel region from 4 to 7 November 2013, during which financial pledges were made to support the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. We call for the fulfilment of the pledges made during both visits.

The achievement of durable peace and sustainable development in countries in conflict and post-conflict situations, in particular, requires national Governments and international partners to continue to develop coordinated approaches tailored to the peacebuilding needs and challenges faced by those countries. The draft resolution also urges continued support for measures to address the challenges of poverty eradication, hunger, job creation and sustainable development in Africa, including, as appropriate, debt relief, improved market access, support for the private sector and entrepreneurship, fulfilment of commitments on official development assistance and increased flows of foreign direct investment and transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms.

We recognize the need for African countries to make continued efforts to create enabling environments for inclusive growth in support of sustainable development and for the international community to make ongoing efforts to increase the flow of new and additional resources for financing for development from all sources, public, private, domestic and foreign. We welcome the various important initiatives established between African countries and their development partners.

In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China looks forward to the draft resolution being adopted by consensus.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.43/Rev.1, entitled "Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those representatives listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/68/L.43/Rev.1: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Turkey.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.43/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/68/L.43/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 68/278).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 63?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 116 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(i) Approval of the appointment of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Note by the Secretary-General (A/68/904)

The President: By its resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993, the General Assembly decided to create the post of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

In paragraph 2 of his note, the Secretary-General, pursuant to the provisions of resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993, proposes to appoint Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein of Jordan as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for a term of office of four years, beginning on 1 September 2014 and ending on 31 August 2018.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to approve the proposal of the Secretary-General to appoint Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein of Jordan as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for a term of office of four years, beginning on 1 September 2014 and ending on 31 August 2018?

It was so decided.

Ms. Kamara (Liberia): On behalf of the African Group, I warmly welcome the appointment of Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for a term of four years, commencing on 1 September 2014. We sincerely congratulate the Prince on that great achievement.

Similarly, the African Group commends Ms. Pillay for the great contribution that she has made to the pursuit, protection and promotion of human rights in the past six years. Through her efforts, the protection of human rights received renewed impetus over the years.

The African Group wishes to underscore the importance of human rights in the political, social and cultural life of every person. Societies will scarcely thrive and prosper where human rights are unprotected and their enjoyment capricious. That is precisely why Africa has made concerted efforts over the years and encouraged the protection and promotion of human rights for all at both the national and the international levels.

The African Group is cognizant of the vast experience that Prince Zeid brings to the portfolio. His outstanding achievements in the service of his country, the United Nations and other international bodies, as well as his contribution to the pursuit of justice for victims of human rights violations, make him eminently suitable to effectively execute his responsibilities as the chief global advocate for the protection and promotion of human rights. I wish to assure Prince Zeid of Africa's cooperation in his new assignment and of our expectation that he will give priority to the strengthening of national capacities to respect and protect human rights.

On behalf of the African Group and in my national capacity, I again congratulate the Prince and wish him success in this new professional endeavour.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): On behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States, I am honoured to welcome the Secretary-General's nomination of His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein of Jordan as the new United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

We believe that Prince Zeid will fulfil his responsibilities as High Commissioner with the extraordinary skill, profound integrity and sound judgement he has displayed during his tenure as the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations. Given the complex issues related to human rights that confront us today, the international community will greatly benefit from his leadership, sense of justice, deep knowledge of issues of international justice and experience in the multilateral arena. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is a critical part of the United Nations system and is mandated to uphold commitments to universal ideals of human dignity. In that light, we look forward to working with Prince Zeid in the future, and we offer our Group's full support to the Office of the High Commissioner.

We would also like to express our appreciation to Ms. Navanethem Pillay for her contributions during her tenure as High Commissioner for Human Rights. On behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, we would like to offer her our best wishes for her future endeavours.

Mr. Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC) in expressing our sincere congratulations to His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein on his appointment as the new United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The members of GRULAC consider the protection and promotion of universal human rights to be extremely important, and recognize the central role of the United Nations in achieving international cooperation in this area. Promoting and protecting all human rights universally is one of the fundamental pillars of the Organization's work. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is a key player in the work of fulfilling the mandates agreed on by the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, a task in which we are certain His Royal Highness will play a major part.

The countries of our region have been actively involved in negotiations, discussions and decision-making on the issue of the enjoyment of all human rights for all peoples and individuals. In our area, we promote the right to peace, development and the self-determination of peoples, the rights of migrants and indigenous peoples, and the right to gender equality. We fight against any kind of discrimination. We would like to assure Prince Zeid that he can count on the full cooperation of every member of GRULAC.

Mr. Wilson (United Kingdom): Today I have the real honour of addressing the General Assembly on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States. On behalf of the Group, I would like to offer our warm congratulations to His Royal Highness Prince Zeid on his appointment to this important office.

The promotion and protection of human rights are a core part of the role of the Organization and one of its founding principles, as set out in the Charter of the United Nations. We are therefore pleased that its work on human rights will be led by somebody with the level of commitment, passion and experience of Prince Zeid. He brings to the role an in-depth knowledge of the United Nations system, experience working in the field and a commitment to gender equality and criminal justice. We look forward to working with him and assure him of our full support.

We would also like to express our Group's great appreciation for the work of Ms. Navanethem Pillay and her tireless efforts over the past six years to highlight injustices and provide a voice for the vulnerable. On behalf of the Western European and Other States Group, I wish both the current and future High Commissioners success in working to realize the full and effective enjoyment of human rights for everyone around the world.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (European Union): The European Union welcomes the approval of the appointment by the General Assembly of His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein of Jordan as the next United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, following the Secretary-General's nomination. We are convinced that Prince Zeid's proven track record in the promotion and protection of human rights and

the fight against impunity, as well as his exceptional diplomatic experience, will be an invaluable asset to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. It is therefore with the greatest respect and support that we acknowledge the appointment of Prince Zeid as the new High Commissioner.

The European Union is a strong supporter of the Office of the High Commissioner and its independence and integrity, as well as of the Human Rights Council. We look forward to open and constructive cooperation with Prince Zeid and his Office in pursuing our common goal of advancing the universality and indivisibility of all human rights all over the world, and in making the principles enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights a reality.

The European Union would also like to pay a warm tribute to the outstanding work done by Ms. Navanethem Pillay as High Commissioner for Human Rights. Ms. Pillay's personal commitment and strong leadership have made an invaluable contribution to consolidating the Office of the High Commissioner as an independent body defending and upholding human rights across the globe, for all people and without discrimination or distinction of any kind or for any reason.

Mr. Seger (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): While associating myself with the statement delivered by the representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, in my capacity as representative of the host country of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, I would like to offer my hearty congratulations to Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein on his appointment as High Commissioner for Human Rights. Switzerland will be very happy to welcome Prince Zeid and his delightful family to Geneva, and I wish him every success, as well as courage and determination, in his important task of protecting and promoting human rights.

On a lighter note, I know that Prince Zeid is a big fan of Swiss cheese fondue, and that he will be starting the job in the autumn, which is the best season for cheese and fondue.

At the same time, and perhaps rather more seriously, I would also like to sincerely thank Ms. Navanethem Pillay for her untiring and exemplary commitment to human rights and the victims of violations of human rights. In my view, she has defended human rights as a South African lion defends its cubs.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan): For a second, when you announced the nomination, Mr. President, and no one clapped, I thought I was off the hook. My supportive wife, who is seated behind me, told me to enjoy this moment and to soak it all up. "After all", she said, "you are among friends whom you have known for a very long time. But when you start this job", she added, "you may not have them for very long". The confidence our spouses have in us is limitless, and so human rights must surely begin in the family home.

With your permission, Sir, I will say a few words in Arabic.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

At the outset, I would like to thank all the members of the General Assembly, the heads of the regional groups and His Excellency the Secretary-General. I thank them all for all the support and trust they have shown this afternoon. I highly appreciate the confidence they are placing in me by appointing me to this position, especially as I am the first High Commissioner from the Asian continent and from the Muslim and Arab worlds. Needless to say, this reflects the commitment of the international community to this important dossier and to advancing it on that continent and other regions of the world, taking into account the independence and mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner, as established by resolution 48/141 in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, subsequent conventions, the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1).

It is in that framework that I have the honour this month to join the highly qualified staff of the Office of the High Commissioner, who have been carrying out such good work wherever they are, whether in the field, in Geneva under the supervision of Assistant Secretary-General Ms. Flavia Pansieri, or in New York under the supervision of Assistant Secretary-General Ivan Šimonović.

The human rights dossier is replete with responsibilities and crucial challenges. Dealing with it requires wisdom and a high level of coordination and communication with the different Governments, civil society and all the United Nations agencies.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Ms. Navi Pillay for her courageous endeavours. I

am honoured to be her successor and to build on her noteworthy achievements.

To conclude, I would like to address my special thanks to His Highness King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, who has been supporting me throughout the years I have spent in his service and the service of the Government and people of Jordan in this international arena.

The President: I thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights elect for his statement. I would let him know that he is back on the hook.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (i) of agenda item 116 and agenda item 116 as a whole?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.